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CONSIDERATIONS

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WHICH

The Bounties granted on Exported Corn,
Malt, and Flour, have on the Manu-
factures of the Kingdom, and the true
Interests of the State.

WITH

A P O S T C R I P T,

CONTAINING

Remarks on a Pamphlet lately published,

INTITULED,

Thoughts on the Causes and Consequences of
the present high Price of Provisions.

It is not an impossible, nay a very feasible Matter, for
the King of England's Subjects to gain the universal
Trade of the whole commercial World.

Sir WILLIAM PETTY.

L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of the following pages had entertained thoughts of hazarding some opinions with the public on several interesting matters, in a more general kind of work; with intending to make the merits of the bounties on which he now writes one topic of discussion. But it being become in a peculiar manner at present the object of public contemplation, alike from the distresses of the industrious poor, and alarms of danger to our invaluable trade in exported manufactures, he resolved, though not till it had become full late, to offer some informations and sentiments thereon, as well to combat mistaken as ensnaring opinions; and therefore hopes, that haste will be admitted as a satisfactory apology for imperfections in composition.

He is very sensible, that many redundancies will appear that required paring away; many uncouth passages that needed much polishing; and that even more

might have been added for the elucidation of truth : though he cannot allow himself to doubt of his having made the evil tendencies, or rather fatal operations, of the bounties clearly evident. Many of the facts which he mentions must appear uncontrovertible, and the rest are supported by good authorities : several new lights are thrown on the subject : the evil effects of fatal causes are clearly traced out ; and in the discussion of his subject, speculative opinion has had the aid, in no inconsiderable degree, of real practical knowledge.

He thinks it cannot be sufficiently lamented, that individual as well as general interests are too commonly mistaken, and particularly with regard to the following opinions : first, that fertility of soil, and agriculture, are in a country the foundations of commercial prosperity : and, secondly, that our trade in exported corn, &c. by means of bounties, is of infinite importance to the kingdom : whereas the real truth is, that commerce is not known ever to have flourished highly in more
than

than three * fertile countries, since the beginning of the world ; which are England, France, and Flanders. And with regard to our exportation of provisions, with bounties, it is hoped he himself has demonstrated that practice to be big with ruin to our manufactories, and of course our best national commerce.

In honour of the manufactories of ancient Burgundy, the order of the Golden Fleece was instituted ; while other nations were besotted with a romantic passion for chivalry. But since foreign oppressive power drove arts and commerce from those dominions, what became the state of Flanders, with all its natural fertility of soil, and application to agriculture ? the inhabitants deserted the country ; the ancient cities became desolated : and if other towns have appeared slowly rising in later times, it has been owing to the gradual

* Sir William Temple, in his account of the Netherlands, and Mr. Hume, in his discourse on taxes, both exemplify this, by mentioning all the ancient and modern places in which commerce has most succeeded.

introduction of new manufactories, though as yet with infinitely less success than those met with of former times.

France is the state of Europe in which commerce has last rose to any flourishing degree : and she is seen of late to adopt the wise policy of freedom in the trade of provisions ; doubtless from conviction, that it is the best guard to be contrived against injury to manufactures, and hurt to national trade in them, those being the surest sources of wealth and power to a state : the permanent strength and riches of a country depending less on the quantity of its cultivated lands, or of the precious metals there may be in it, (and still much less on such artificial kinds of riches, among the people, as have their source in public poverty, and their support from public burthens) than in the numbers of its industrious inhabitants ; in whom really exists, as all wise men have long allowed, the only great and inexhaustible wealth and power of a nation.

That

That Great Britain has too long mistaken, or imperfectly understood, her true interests, and that from thence they have become greatly endangered, are the points endeavoured to be made evident by the following work, if it can be thought deserving of that name; from which the writer has no selfish interest of his own to promote, nor did he act therein under any kind of influence whatsoever: his sole motive for undertaking it being the service of his country; for which he has ever had, and will retain, a most affectionate regard.

I am Great Britain has long mistaken
the character of the people, but true in
that from thence they have derived
the character, and the points of
view to be seen in the world.



CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

E F F E C T S

OF THE

Bounties on Exported Corn, Malt,
and Flour, &c.

TO the great misfortune of this kingdom, ideas have been too long entertained of a separate landed and trading interest; though none could ever be warranted by real experience or sound reason, both having served in all times to shew the contrary; for the lands always must apparently have owed much of their essential value to commerce. The earliest accounts given of our island were,
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from the trade which was carried on with it: and we well know, that under the feudal tenures the lands were indebted for no inconsiderable part of their value to the exportation of ores, wool, &c. nay occasionally even corn; as without such traffic this country must not only have been destitute of money, but even the greatest possessors of land would likewise have wanted many of the best comforts and blessings of life.

Henry VII. without foreseeing, or perhaps wishing such immense benefits should accrue to the kingdom from his measure*, laid the first foundations of power, prosperity, and genuine liberty in England, by projecting the means for enabling the Barons and other great possessors of lands to alienate them. This opened at once the most extensive field

* The same may be said of his son, Henry VIII. concerning religious liberty: for he never intended his proceedings in reformation should reach to the overthrow of the Roman Catholic Church, much less to the establishment of general toleration.

to emulation and industry: and though the good effects of such a cause in the beginning were trivial, and in their progress but slow, owing to the succeeding unsettled state of the times, yet no sooner had religious liberty become securely established by Queen Elizabeth, than their advance to perfection was alike rapid and signal, insomuch that every one strongly felt and highly gloried in such advantages.

No truth can be more clear, than that all value of land, beyond the mere means of but uncomfortable subsistence to the possessors, must have been derived to it from commerce; which gradually increased population, improved every useful art then known, introduced new ones, as also, successively, the polite arts, as well as the sciences; and afterwards furnished those encouragements which brought them to perfection. By such happy means the numbers of people were continually augmenting, whose increasing consumption of the products of lands made such possessions grow every day more valuable, by

the requisite increase of tillage and pasturage. Mean time, improvements in the arts, and increase of labour, or employment, in manufacturing native raw materials of all kinds, as well as such as became imported, by degrees so enhanced the value to the state and individuals of lands, arts, and labour, as to make an accurate estimation impossible to be framed. These are truths so self-evident in their natures, as to admit of no dispute. Thus then, in the acquisition of such advantages to the general community, did all interests combine, and were alike benefited by so doing. As their union produced common benefit, their disunion must produce common injury: therefore any idea of distinct interests must be founded in ignorance, and any continued pursuit of them will be the most mischievous of all folly. Yet ungrounded in truth or wisdom, as the opinion of distinct interests really are, they have, however, unhappily been too prevalent among some kinds of people; nay have been intruded even into assemblies where the truest knowledge is
most

most requisite; and therefore it must be deemed an act of patriotism to endeavour at exploding such policy.

There has of late been much talked and written concerning our national bounties on exported grain, flour, and malt; matters which at present are highly interesting to the community: so much so, that perhaps our future prosperity as a people may greatly depend on our getting a right knowledge of them. But what we should most lament is, that in the dispute skill has been more exerted to disguise than elucidate truth. But when men shew themselves to be the champions of partial interests, we must expect deceptions will be aimed at: and indeed such endeavours have been made but too manifest on one side of the important question now discussed; but that they have proved unsuccessful with people in general, may possibly have been more owing to the poignancy of their feelings, than to the clearness of their conceptions concerning the merits of the point disputed.

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The chief arguments insisted on in favour of such bounties are,

1st. That the lands, their cultivation and products, are the foundations of all our national prosperity and power.

2dly. That our trade in exported corn, &c. with bounties, is the best branch we are possessed of, because it enriches the kingdom with more returns than any other.

3dly. That the bounties have proved greatly advantageous to manufacturing at home, as well as to every other branch of our national trade, by making wheat greatly cheaper, upon an average, since than it had been for many years before they were established.

4thly. That it is against the true interest of the kingdom to have bread and other provisions cheap, because their being so encourages idleness and vice among the lower orders of people.

5thly.

5thly. That the bounties secure the freightage of those commodities to our own shipping; which is a valuable source of employment, of profit, and of naval strength to the kingdom.

6thly. That to take off the bounties would be to discourage agriculture, render all the improvements we have made fruitless, and expose the kingdom to the danger of experiencing future frequent and great wants, as also of becoming much impoverished by the money that may be drained off for the purchase of such supplies: and,

7thly. That taking off the bounties would grievously affect the property of landed gentlemen, by lessening the value and incomes of their estates, who bear their share of all other public burthens, besides a heavy land-tax, which is peculiar to themselves.

These are the principal allegations in support of the bounties. We will now
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proceed to take them into consideration, in the order in which they are arranged; and try if it is not demonstrable, that reason and fact are both clearly against them.

1st. That the Lands, their cultivation and products, are the foundations of all our national prosperity and power.

That they were the foundations of the ancient power of the kingdom is granted: but that the present prosperity, and the greater part of the power of the kingdom is owing to manufacturing and trade, we shall endeavour to prove. The lands of the kingdom could doubtless sustain a less limited population than heretofore, because more of their natural products and raw materials might be carried to foreign and home markets. We might likewise export more corn, but it could not be with bounties, because we should have no means for so doing: on the contrary, necessity would probably oblige us to charge such exports with duties, for the support of government,

government, and defence of the kingdom; as is actually the case at present in almost every country of Europe that does grow corn for exportation. The other traffic which we should have, would be in ores, wool, hides†, cattle, &c. and the utmost which these furnished the kingdom with in ancient times, were the means of having some small shipping, arms, and ammunition for defence, indifferent cloathing, mostly imported from abroad, and small quantities of gold and silver, for national circulation. Such were all that the lands could produce or procure, while our national dependence rested upon them, as the history of ancient times makes apparent: and in what state of defence they put the kingdom for many ages, we may judge from the several easy conquests that were made of it by the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, though our ores were highly estimable, our climate peculiarly favourable both for agri-

† Tanning however was an art early introduced into this country.

culture and pasturage, and we have reason to think, from the natural talents of the inhabitants, that they made as good use of their lands as the generality of their neighbours; for they had very early a communication with enlightened nations, and in the time of the Druids this island was greatly resorted to, as the seat of religious learning.

The Burgundians, however, took the first lead in manufacturing in this part of the world. They became raised by their arts and commerce to a wealthy and powerful state: and such they continued, till the rash adventures and ill policy of Charles, their last duke, involved them in ruin and slavery, not long before the times in which the first happy changes began to take place in England, in favour of civil and religious liberty. In short, the arts, manufactures, and commerce of England, from a concurrence of lucky circumstances, arose gradually on the ruins of those of Burgundy, in such a manner, that the two countries might be said, in a great degree,
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to change conditions; one falling back from prosperity and power, as fast as the other advanced to it. Thenceforward did the arts progressively so much more enrich this kingdom than the lands and their natural and even cultivated products could do, as the difference is between ores and manufactured metals, raw hides and tanned leather, raw wool and woollen manufactures, or in short, every thing in their rude condition of nature, or most improved state from art; in many of which changes they increased more in value than an hundred-fold. At the same time they so far benefited the lands, as to give gradual and amazing advances to their value in all the products of them, such as corn, flesh, hides, wool, timber, bark, fire-wood, ores, &c. as they were severally used for food, in manufactures, in building of houses and ships, or were made otherwise articles of commerce. Hence cities, towns, and villages increased rapidly with population, and new ones became built; the royal navy grew to be formidable; mercantile navigation abundant; a spirit of

enterprize and discovery added new regions to the dominions of England, and her expanding commerce brought home the treasures of every quarter of the globe. In proportion as the acquisition of wealth sunk the value of money, it raised that of land and its products; so that the whole of the immensely-increased value of the latter has been entirely derived from labour, arts, and commerce.

Thus from weakening the too great aristocratical power which the lands formerly gave to their owners, have they derived almost the whole of their present highly-augmented value; while the kingdom has likewise been indebted thereto for its liberty, prosperity, and power: but should the possessors of land ever again, through infatuation, suppose they have an interest to support distinct from that of trade, acquire a power tyrannically to oppress it, and persevere in so doing, they most assuredly will become woefully convinced by the event, that in the ruins of trade all their greatness will become involved;

volved; for trade, which gives their lands their value, derives little of its support from them; of which instances have appeared in all ages of the world, and Holland, Genoa, Venice, Hamburg, &c. are such in the present times.

2dly. That our trade in exported corn, &c. with bounties, is the best branch we are possessed of, because it enriches the kingdom with more returns than any other.

This argument, or rather assertion, may be thus brought to fair trial. Fix on a quantity of corn to any given value, and then examine how much of every species of labour it has furnished to be put in a marketable state: which done, then oppose to it the labour which is furnished for bringing to an equal degree of perfection any of our principal manufactures to a like amount: and as the wealth and strength of a state depend on the numbers of its useful and industrious people, this examination must decide the point highly in favour of manufactures against agriculture.

culture. Thus do a thousand pounds returns for manufactures infinitely more strengthen a state than an equal sum returned for corn, even if the latter was not purchased by a bounty, to the amount of from ten to twenty-five per cent. which makes the returns in effect so much less than an equal sum returned for manufactures. Nor is it true that corn brings more riches to the kingdom than any other branch of trade; for we have scarcely any considerable one of manufactures which does not return us much more, and to infinitely greater advantage; witness the branches of woollens, hard-ware, &c. and they are also more constant in their course, as well as more certain of proving gainful to adventurers. But we may boldly appeal to more evident facts, for saying that manufacturing has always enriched every country in which it prospered, while neither observation or history can so much as furnish a single instance of a nation made rich and powerful by the growth of corn for exportation. The countries which most depend on such exports in these times

times are Poland, Sicily, Sardinia, Naples, Greece, Barbary, some of the Azores, and North America ; none of which grant bounties on such exportations, but, on the contrary, in most of them a duty is paid by the purchasers, and yet they certainly are poor countries ; while some of the Hanse Towns, Holland, Genoa, Venice, Leghorn, and the south of France, always require imported corn for their subsistence, and yet they are made wealthy, and some of them powerful, by manufactories and commerce. As is the case at present with regard to agriculture, manufactories, and commerce, such was it also in ancient times : therefore we may from general observation and experience pronounce, that the former is by no means the parent of the latter, even without giving corn an artificial price (which must be hurtful) for home consumption, by means of bounties on exportation ; but as the practice of doing it is evidently favourable to the manufactories of other countries, and in the same degree prejudicial to our own, by making the means of living cheap

cheap there and dear here, and of course the rates of labour respectively so in both, all returns of wealth from such trade should be considered as no other than gilded poison to our body politic, preying upon and destroying the very vitals of the state; for such, with regard to affluence and power, our manufactures are, and our trade in them.

3dly. *That the bounties have proved greatly advantageous to manufacturing at home, as well as to every other branch of our national trade, by making wheat greatly cheaper, upon an average, since, than it had been for many years before they were established.*

This argument may appear specious, but it is destitute of solidity. Whether we should intirely rely on the registers that have been furnished of the prices of corn for a series of years before and after the establishment of the bounties, or admit the markets from which they were kept (one of which was Windsor) to have been sufficiently

sufficiently important for ascertaining general prices, are points that may be little deserving of inquiry : this we however know for certain, that the civil war, which ended about forty years before, had in some degree desolated the country, by impoverishing and thinning its inhabitants : and indeed the whole succeeding times to the Revolution, were so disturbed by animosities and party contentions, as to afford little scope or encouragement for the improvement of arts. But the case became different in all respects soon after the Revolution ; and therefore agriculture may be said to have been over-encouraged since that time, by the means of bounties, which it did not want. But the real question however for national consideration is, not what the prices of corn were in England before that time, but what they have been since in all other corn countries ; for with an eye to manufacturing, national trade, and of course prosperity, we must judge from the general market prices of the world, whether ours in England have been kept above or below the proper marks.

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And

And that they have been kept above them has been evident, from the bounties we have paid for enabling our corn to find purchasers at foreign ports: as for example, Polish and Prussian corn has been sent to Holland at natural prices to the growers of it, but enhanced on the way to consumers by artificial means; while the natural prices of ours have been raised at home and reduced abroad by the bounties, from ten to five-and-twenty per cent. The same may be said with regard to Lisbon, which is always a place of import; Sicily and Naples have sent their corn to Portugal charged with a duty on exportation, which of course enhanced the natural prices to the consumers; the North Americans sent theirs much longer voyages at its natural prices; and the Baltic corn went at such to the growers, and often in the disadvantageous way to consumers of being re-shipped from Holland and Hamburg, while ours was forced to be aided in its sale by bounties at the rates before mentioned; which shews at what forced prices it has been sold abroad, and to what artificial

ficial prices it has been raised at home; no less, it must be again said, than from ten to five-and-twenty per cent. with moreover the charge on home consumers, by taxes, of those bounties paid to foreigners.

Still more injurious to home consumers, and also our best national trade, have been the effects of our bounties on all the other kinds of provisions that are products of our own lands; such as flesh, butter, cheese, &c. which by the most moderate estimation have been raised at least fifty per cent. to consumers since the bounties were established, from apparently two causes, viz. the appropriation of too many lands to agriculture, on the view of exportation, and the prodigious increased breed of horses† for home and foreign use: the effects of which two fatal causes upon our
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† In the present state of the kingdom the excessive breed of horses is justly considered by the judicious as a great national evil. Would it not be better then, that the exportation of them was intirely prohibited, or at least the sending of them out of the kingdom charged

manufactures, trade, and even navigation, have been deplorably great: for not only the manufacturers of France, Holland, and other Countries have been supplied with butter and salted flesh at near half the prices our own have been forced to pay for them, (and likewise bread so much cheaper) but their ships also have been victualled to the like degree of advantage. All of which are indisputably the blessed effects of bounties on exported grain, malt, and flour, with no inconsiderable aid from our too great breed of horses.

4thly. *That it is against the true interest of the kingdom to have bread and other provisions cheap, because their being so encourages idleness and vice among the lower orders of people.*

This argument, by the laws of common sense, directly militates against the former;

with a considerable duty? In like manner, the abundant use of them for mere pleasure at home is become a most pernicious species of luxury, and of course a just object of taxation; especially if made a substitute for some of those that are become grievous to poverty, industry, and trade.

but we ought not to wonder at inconsistencies, any more than absurdities, in men who are necessitated to say any thing or assert every thing in support of a bad cause. Certain it is that labour cannot be made cheap where provisions are dear; nor, of course, manufactures: and if we cannot supply foreign countries with the latter as cheap as our neighbours, we naturally must lose all such trade. No nation will pay us more for a commodity than the rate at which they can obtain it from other countries. Friends, and even relations will not do it in their private dealings: how much less then should we expect it of states, which all experience may serve to shew have neither friendship or gratitude, all policy or friendship among them being no other than the pursuit of self-interest? Some of our great men best know, whether answers to reproaches have been lately made in this stile or not; but a very slight review of the shifting alliances and pursuits of courts and states must be sufficient to shew the want of political knowledge, either in statesmen or nations, who rely
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upon generosity or gratitude for operating against interest in any court or people upon earth. The utmost that can be expected in dealings, either from nations or individuals, is mere preference, where advantages are equal; and who expect more will become the dupes of their own credulity.

The cheapness of manufactures can only secure their sale; and the prices of them must every where depend on the rates labour is at, which always will be proportioned to the means of subsistence. Men do, or may be made to work for little money where provisions are cheap, but they cannot do so where they are dear. Cheap provisions, therefore, naturally make cheap labour, and of course cheap manufactures, which only can enlarge or preserve such kinds of national trade, which are the most advantageous that can be pursued: but dear provisions must make labour high, and of course manufactures the same, which will cause a sure decline, and by degrees annihilation of all such trade in any country.

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We will not insist on the want either of Christian or constitutional right in the few of a free people to make miserably-toiling and half-starved slaves of the many, for the indulgence in themselves of insatiable avarice, or unbounded profusion; but this may be insisted on, both from reason and experience, that no part of a people will bear much tyranny and oppression who have a remedy in their hands, and none who are useful can ever be without one. The same calamities or injuries as brought the Flemings and Hugonots to England, will send Englishmen to other countries, and transplant their arts with them, in spite of all the restraints that even tyranny can invent; and whether oppression proceeds from one or a million, its effects will be found exactly the same upon all those who suffer from it. The best writers on policy are of opinion, that in free states equality among the people should be preserved as much as possibly can be consistent with good order, because the extremes of riches on one hand, and poverty on the other, are to be equally avoided,

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for the common good of all, as great wealth makes people dangerously presumptuous, and great poverty as dangerously desperate. To aim therefore at starving the useful into excessive toil, in order to enable the useless to indulge themselves in all kinds of luxury and profusion, is not only the most wicked, but also the most dangerous policy that can be practised ; so that it should be held equally infamous and detestable in those who adopt or defend it.

This is however not urged in defence or excuse of vice or idleness in the lower orders of people, for they alike deserve punishment, and by every proper means should be prevented. All good governments will apply (and in free states they are indispensibly necessary) rewards and punishments for these purposes. Men should be encouraged to do well, and restrained from doing evil, by punishments *in terrorem* : but wherever the former are found wanting, desperation will soon render the latter of no effect.

All

All reason and experience must alike serve to shew that labour, as a marketable commodity, will naturally bear its fair price; which every where should be the means of decent subsistence, according to the station or merits of the workman. Such is the equitable value of labour: and as the labours of the people are the riches of a state, every government should so regulate matters, that all industrious and sober people be enabled to live comfortably: and also that vice and idleness be discouraged, by punishments inflicted on the dissolute and worthless; which practice, in either case, must be acknowledged intirely agreeable to the spirit of our excellent constitution, as well as the letter of our laws.

5thly. *That the bounties secure the freightage of those commodities to our own shipping, which is a valuable source of employment, of profit, and of naval strength to the kingdom.*

It cannot be denied that the bounties do secure all such freightage to our shipping,

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or that such employment of them is of profit to the kingdom, and an increase of our naval strength. But should the bounties be taken off, those advantages might be equally secured, by allowing free exportation in our own shipping, and laying a duty on such as may be loaded on foreign vessels.

6thly. That to take off the bounties would be to discourage agriculture, render all the improvements we have made fruitless, and expose the kingdom to the danger of experiencing future frequent and great wants, as also of becoming much impoverished by the money that may be drained off for the purchase of such supplies.

These are no other than chimeras of ignorance or phantoms of terror, raised by craft for intimidation ; because no rational mind can suppose, that either the owners or occupiers of lands will not, for their own sakes, endeavour to put them to the best uses possible. Mens regard for their own interests may be relied on for so doing :

we

we live in times that discountenance all fears to the contrary. Alterations may indeed take place in the plans for practising husbandry: the eyes of farmers may become more turned towards a national than foreign consumption; as they ought always to have been, for the good of the state. There will likewise be less encouragement given to excessive hoarding, as also to speculative dealings; because commodities of such kinds will then only obtain their natural prices abroad, and consequently artificial ones cannot be supported at home; so that all the effects of so good a cause can only serve to insure the future prosperity of the kingdom, nay we may say the very safety of it. But proportionally as our views may be shortened towards exportation, they will become extended towards home consumption; which is the very object they should be directed to for national advantage, as every landed man's wishes must then correspond with the common good. Instead of starving down population, his unalterable desire will be to see it increase: and instead of

seeking to share in the fruits of villainy and oppression with jobbers, engrossers, and all other such pests of society, he will delight himself with the hopes of beholding an opulent town rise within the limits of his own estate, from the flourishing of our trade; and so have the honourable joy of seeing the interests of his country advancing with his own.

Free exportation for all surpluses of what is requisite for our national consumption, must be all that is needful for the encouragement of cultivation: and such indeed may be considered as the natural and constitutional right of landlords, because intirely consistent with the public welfare. Yet this is more than they enjoy in most of those countries which in the greatest degree depend on the exportation of corn; for, as has been said before, there is in many a duty laid thereon. But while free exportation of surpluses should be thought right, forced exportation must be considered as mischievous, nay dangerous: and such even the former was often experienced to be before

before we were a manufacturing country, as not only writers, but even laws § make appear. To give agriculture, therefore, all the advantages here which it has ever had in any other country, and more than it now has in most, must be surely deemed encouragement enough ; and no evils, but, on the contrary, great national benefits will result from our not doing more.

7thly. That taking off the bounties would grievously affect the property of landed gentlemen, by lessening the value and incomes of their estates, who bear their share of all other public burthens, besides a heavy land-tax, which is peculiar to themselves.

On this last article of the allegations proposed to be taken into consideration, we will begin with observing, that too great attention given to the mere nominal value

§ So long ago as the 34th of Edward III. there was an Act passed for prohibiting the exportation of corn. But it was again permitted, by another Act of the 17th of Richard II. with a power of restraint lodged in the council.

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of estates has been long an infatuation of the times, and that the removal thereof can prove no other than an imaginary evil ; for, when all circumstances are considered, it will be found nothing more. It is not so much what money a man receives, as how far it will go, that makes his circumstances affluent or otherwise : for if an over-value of land and its products cause a more than proportional under-value of money, he will in that operation find his gain on one hand over-balanced by his loss on the other. For example, let us suppose since the establishment of the bounties, that a gentleman has raised the value of his estate a fourth part, which upon the whole lands of the kingdom is perhaps the utmost of their increased value : this fourth part (to talk in the mercantile stile, which is most proper for calculations) cannot be derived to him from that measure, because the bounties can operate no farther therein than the medium of from ten to twenty-five per cent : and in that the hoarding farmer, jobber, mealman, factor, and other dealers, all
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partake with him. So that admitting his increase of property be six per cent. on the bounties, and it cannot rationally be estimated at more, if it is considered how much the heavy weight of the bounties upon our manufactories, and every other species of labour, has contributed to the enhancement of the poor's rates, which are so burthenfome upon lands, he will probably find most of his imaginary gain from the bounties deducted in that single article; to which if he adds, upon estimation, what he pays extraordinary from their operations, not only on the provisions consumed in his own family, but also on every thing his family uses for wear and other purposes, as well as in wages to all workmen, which are enhanced from the rates of provisions, &c. so increased, and in the estimation of which they will ever take care to be on the right side for themselves; I say, when all these additional charges to him, arising from the same cause, are considered, he will find, that not only the advantages of the bounties to his estate, but even those of improved lands

lands and skill in husbandry are all over-balanced to himself by the evil operations of the bounties; which, while they do injury to his property, are bringing ruin likewise on his country. From thus tracing the operations of a tax laid on trade and labour for the advantage of lands, it may be well worth observing, in what manner it is made to fall back again upon the lands with increased weight; as it will serve to demonstrate the accuracy of Mr. Locke's judgment, when he said, "That all taxes do ultimately fall on the lands;" for, with but few exceptions thereto, such must really prove the case.

It is then to be hoped, what has been said on this part of our subject will serve to convince the landed gentlemen, that the abolition of the bounties will rather prove advantageous than otherwise to them; while the doing it must likewise highly promote the true interests of their country. As to the assertion, that the landed gentlemen bear their share in all other public burthens, besides a land-tax, which is pecu-

peculiar to themselves ; nothing more need be said thereon, than that it must be allowed they do bear their share of most other taxes, but however not all*, as many other kinds of property pay peculiar taxes ; even labour does it in statute-work, from which it may be said to receive little advantage ; but farmers and gentlemen undoubtedly do from what they may any way contribute towards the preservation of the roads. Besides, the lands are not only the greatest property of the kingdom, but the very property also which is most immoveable, and consequently of the greatest importance to defend. To landed property government, then, as well as national protection, is most needful ; and therefore, in justice, it ought peculiarly to contribute towards both. As for the land-tax, considering how greatly that kind of property has of late years become improved, was it

* Particularly of the two important excises on strong beer and malt spirits ; much of which latter the poor may be truly said to pay out of their bellies, as well as from off their backs, and in so doing they promote the landed interest.

but rightly laid, it would not only be reasonable as a peculiar tax, but even prove lighter to them than such as must become needful to re-place it, though more generally levied.

Having with candour thus endeavoured to refute the several principal arguments which have been so long hacknied in defence of the bounties under consideration, let us now proceed to the making of some few other observations on so important a subject.

It is not unreasonable to suppose, whatever other pretences might be made, that the real design of first establishing bounties on exported grain, &c. was to make them sweeteners of the land-tax, that it might the better go down; they being twins of the same session †, and the bounties the first-born of the two: nay it may even appear to have been considered at once as preparatory to, and an equivalent for the latter. That a land-tax was both

† First of William and Mary.

needful

needful and equitable at that time must be allowed: and though all other kinds of property were included in that taxation, for it was then made, and continues to be, in the mode of a general subsidy, the sweetener was but partial; for if it really was supposed of general advantage, it must have been most grossly misunderstood by the body of the people, as the immediate effects thereof undoubtedly were, the raising of the prices upon native consumers just so much as the respective bounties amounted to, with eventually taxing the whole people for the payment of them. We will not say Dutch policy any way interfered in the matter; but it may truly be said, that every good from it has constantly, in the greatest degree, been reaped by the Hollanders, while every evil from it has been sustained by this kingdom. All countries indeed who have since imported our corn have in some degree been benefited by the bounties; but Holland greatly the most, as her malt distilleries and starch manufactories have had, in the use of our very materials since

that period of time, just so much advantage over our own as the amount of such bounties has been ; and indeed their manufactories in general, and the whole of their employments, were favoured beyond ours to the extent of those bounties, because their workmen of all kinds had such supplies for their consumption so much cheaper than those of this kingdom. Besides which, as they have always made it their practice to purchase great quantities of corn in England and the Baltic, whenever to be had at favourable prices, and to keep large stocks thereof on hand, they were always ready, of course, to take every early advantage of favourable foreign markets for occasional re-exportation, and consequently made it a most lucrative branch of commerce, having had at all times the full advantages of the bounties therein.

That England did not for some time discover all the ill effects of these bounties, may be assignable to various causes, and perhaps among others the following : the national spirit of industry which became
strongly

strongly exerted on the establishment of freedom; the great improvements in rising arts among us, and increase of useful knowledge; the growing state of our colonies, and the inattention to commercial knowledge, or want of it, in some of our neighbours; occasionally, to the obstructions given by war to infant manufactories in other countries; and of late, it is to be feared, to the many species of too refined artifice which have been practised here, as well by manufacturers as by dealers for exportation; which latter have for some time past been turning the tables against us, from their own craft, by discrediting our national commodities, and debasing that high character in trade which had acquired us the strong commercial confidence of other nations; and which was altogether as requisite to preserve it. But the state of our national trade is now really become such, that even appearances are wanting for deceiving us any longer: for the improved policy, skill, and assiduity of other nations in manufacturing and commerce; the increased burthens of our taxes; the
 fatal

fatal operations of the bounties under consideration, both at home and abroad, and the want of right regulations in manufacturing and dealings, have long served continually to diminish our trade in exported manufactures, which is the best kind of commerce. Yet weak or wicked men, for the serving of selfish purposes, are continually endeavouring to infuse in the public mind an opinion, that our corn trade, with bounties, is the most advantageous to the kingdom of any, and of course the best to be pursued in its very utmost extent. They represent the establishment of those bounties as the highest effort of human policy, and beyond all example either in ancient or modern times. And indeed it was such profundity of wisdom as no preceeding age could any where attain to, from the beginning of the world; and too deep for any existing state to be able to comprehend. We may therefore justly consider it as a scheme of policy which never had an example, nor will ever have a follower; so that if it serves to prove us a wise people, it must serve at the same time

time to prove, that all the rest of the world ever have been, and ever will be, quite otherwise.

The French, indeed, we not long ago were told, had this matter in contemplation ; but, after mature consideration, they thought proper to reject it ; and have since taken the opposite course, by establishing freedom in the trade of corn, both with regard to imports and exports ; being determined, as we must suppose, not to let a short-sighted landed interest destroy in that kingdom its invaluable trade of exported manufactures, debilitate and bankrupt the state, and eventually ruin themselves with their country ; though from the nature of their government, which is absolute monarchy, the nobility and gentry who must compose the landed interest, are more peculiarly there than here the chief supports of regal authority, and of course might expect to be proportionally favoured. But fortunately, at least in this instance, for France, they have not the power in their hands to sacrifice the interests of the kingdom

dom to their own, whether real or imaginary: and the government is seen to have wisdom enough not to suffer the state to be made the dupe of a blind and greedy landed interest, any more than of an intriguing, tyrannical, and selfish church.

The political views of that kingdom formerly were intirely military; but experience has since taught them wisdom, and made them become the most formidable rivals of all other states, as well as this, in manufactures and commerce. They have for a long time surpassed the Italians in their silk manufactures, which the great duke of Sully thought an impracticable scheme. They have since successfully rivalled the Germans in many of their linen manufactures, as all our merchants who have lived in Spain, Portugal, or several other countries, must very well know. They have beat us out of our silk stocking trade in many countries of Europe and elsewhere, nay even in some degree at home, and they are now doing the same in our hat trade abroad, although the
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furs are to so great a degree in our hands. The same may be said with regard to our stuffs and fine cloths: and they were many years ago very near rivalling us in our baize trade, and possibly will soon do it, as well as in our ordinary cloths, from having, what we greatly want here, a real and active council of commerce, and a wise and well executed police. The great success of their woollen manufactories is well known to such of our merchants as are acquainted with our Turkey trade, or that which we carry on with the southern countries of Europe.

But other lights need not be wanting for our information of the progress which they have made in rivalling us in the woollen manufactories. A view of the state of their trade in raw wool will serve to confirm what has already been advanced: for besides all of their own growth, which they work up, they engross entirely what is produced on the whole coast of Barbary, the territory of Algier excepted; for the trade in that commodity is yet free at the

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latter place, but we do not hear any is imported from thence into England : besides which, they import most of the Spanish wool that is sold to foreign countries : we also know they get a great deal from Ireland, and must suppose not a little from England ; but whether they obtain any from the Turkish or Italian dominions, or from any other country not named, I am unable to say. It should be thought enough, that we are satisfied with regard to what has been mentioned, as facts, on this matter, (and they are such as may be relied on) to become greatly alarmed at the progress which they have of late years made in rivalling us in our long-boasted best branch of commerce. Let the serious reader here pause, and reflect on the manifest and astonishing disparity, from the respective national supplies of wool only, which there has imperceptibly become between the woollen manufactories of France and England ; while we have been lulled into dreams of our being the chief suppliers of almost every country upon earth with such goods : nor should it be at all doubted, that

that a little longer inattention in us to the true interests of the kingdom, with farther indulgence of pushing such as are partial among ourselves, will give them advantages enough over us for effectually accomplishing the ruin of our trade.

Let us next calmly consider, what advantages our very bounties on exported corn, &c. must throw into the hands of our rivals in manufactures. From all our ports westward of Dover to Penzance, corn can be carried sooner, and with less danger, to some port of France than it can be brought to London, or even conveyed coast-ways from one port to another, if at any considerable distance. The same may be said of our ports eastward of the Downs to Stockton, with respect to Holland, and other ports more eastward on the continent. So that where there may be a less charge of freightage, we pay bounties (as prices here may chance to prove) from ten to above twenty per cent. in favour of foreign manufacturers, to the prejudice in like degree of our own;

who must by that means eat their bread so much dearer than their foreign rivals: and what is still worse, our own workmen will be taxed all the while for the payment of such bounties. All such measures must evidently prove so oppressive in their operations to our own people, and so ruinous to our manufactories, that it should be no cause for wonder if we soon become disabled even for working up our own wool, and find ourselves necessitated to send it after our corn, &c. for sale, or let it perish on our hands. Perhaps the advantages thrown from our own possession, of comparative cheap workmanship, by means of our bounties on corn, &c. may have enabled them to offer such prices for our wool as occasion the excessive rates at which our manufacturers have of late been forced to purchase it; for surely it must otherwise seem incredible, that so great an advance of price should accompany as great a decrease of demand; which, as far as concerns our national use of that commodity, appears really to have been the case. The supposition should be thought wild, that
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our breed of sheep has so diminished as to reconcile such otherwise counter-operations to the natural effects of such causes. Certain it is, that those who should best know the truth in these matters do speak positively as to the facts, of manufactories declining, and the prices of wool greatly increasing: and whatever the cause may be of the latter effect, its tendency must prove to the farther injury of our manufactories; nay to their utter ruin, if it be not timely discovered, and an effectual remedy applied. But should the cause really be what we only venture to apprehend, which is being out-bid for it by the French; then, should France continue to pursue that wise plan of commercial policy which she has been said to have framed, and to the freedom which she has granted to traffic in provisions, add an increase of security to private property, render the useful professions more respectable, and actually establish religious toleration, it may be feared she will therein spread such strong allurements to desertion, even from among ourselves, as may prove too powerful for the
most

most wretched of this kingdom to withstand; those, it is lamentable to consider, who are also the most useful people: and by so doing, give such a blow to our greatest national interests as may fatally make them irretrievable.

Industry and trade will most certainly follow encouragement, with protection: and riches and power will as surely be their attendants. No coercive applications can have force sufficient for restraining them. They will emigrate, like the wretched slaves of German tyrants, in spite of the severest penal laws. Does the making of smuggling felony lessen in men their disposition to such practice, while encouraged by bad state policy? Alas, neither hangmen ashore, nor cutters at sea, will be able so to do, while men can foresee more advantage from the practice (with any hazard to themselves) of defrauding the revenue, and to any degree injuring their country, than they rationally can from such applications of their skill and labour as would insure their own safety, and

and prove of service to the state. It is ill policy only makes smugglers, or keeps them in the practice; for there is but one way to prevent it, which is to make it not worth peoples while to continue. Similar is the case with regard to industry and trade, those foundations of wealth and power. They cannot be confined here by constraint: you must suffer no state to tempt them from you, by stronger allurements than you offer for their stay; for if you rashly or indiscreetly do, they most certainly will desert you, in spite of all the intimidations which can be contrived for preventing it. What but oppressions at home, and encouragement afforded here, brought the Flemish manufacturers among us, who laid the foundation of that commerce which afterwards raised this kingdom to such a pitch of prosperity? or what but the revocation of the edict of Nantes, by the late tyrant of France, and his subsequent persecutions, drove the Hugonots, with their arts, to this kingdom and other states, for shelter, in spite of all the penalties he could invent, and all the

the restraints he could contrive. But that and other fatal errors in policy his country has since discovered, and thereon regulated her conduct by the dictates of sounder judgment.

But to return to our subject. There surely can be no greater cause for astonishment in men of real knowledge, than to observe the excess of phrenzy, or ignorance, which is now prevailing, concerning the value of our lands and their products. Such a succession of unfavourable seasons having happened about the world, as perhaps the oldest man in being never heard of before, and which the youngest existing, with living to old age, will probably never see again, have served to make people think things will be always much the same; and therefore lands may be raised to any value or rent, and of course farmers or dealers expect any prices they please to demand for the products of them: whereas a favourable season or two cannot fail of bringing matters again to their true bearing; when the comparative average price of our
wheat

wheat will not exceed five and twenty shillings a quarter, shipping-price, whether with or without bounty : and surely such seasons may be expected to return, and continue in the ordinary course, as heretofore experienced. On what principles of judgment could opinions be formed (and such were formed about the country by the farmers and dealers in corn) that, had the last harvest in this kingdom proved ever so plentiful, wheat would not have sunk in any material degree in price, as it could be kept from the markets, there being little old corn upon hand? for had the crops of the southern countries proved favourable (which they could not know was not like to happen) and our own but even moderate, which was generally expected, would not hoarding upon speculation have been madness, as a good crop every where in the succeeding year was, in the ordinary course of things, more to be expected than not; which, if it should happen, would then, in all human probability, have sunk the value of wheat every where at least fifty per cent? In such

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a case.

a case then, obstinacy would have proved, in that degree, injurious to individuals and the state: and such are too frequently the effects of avarice in these matters, all arising from ignorant speculation, with regard to exportation, on which the bounty fatally too much rivets the eyes of our farmers and jobbers in corn; while, as a manufacturing country, the prosperity of that best branch of our trade, and the welfare of the state, alike make it needful, that our attention in agriculture and husbandry should be intirely directed to our own supply of all things: nor ought artificial prices to be supported by continual speculations, with an eye to bounties for exportation. Besides, hoarding to excess is in general as prejudicial to individuals as to the state; for gain therefrom to either must be ever uncertain; while a loss in waste will be sure, in quality hazarded, and as often in price as otherwise to both: therefore, the doing it cannot proceed from sound judgment, or prove in general of advantage to individuals or the state, was even our making the most of our corn the first

first object of the latter, which is very far from being the case.

It is a maxim among all wise dealers in perishable commodities, to prefer securing a small present profit, to the running of risks on distant hopes of a greater : and real experience serves to prove the great wisdom of it in practice. That *light profits and quick returns make a heavy purse*, is a trading proverb : the wisdom of which is admitted in all kinds of traffic, but particularly must be so with regard to commodities that are liable to waste or damage. Nothing, therefore, can be more dangerous to individuals, or hurtful to the community, than a spirit of avarice interfering with dealings in the necessaries of life. And the opinion is groundless, that we owe our security against want to the hoards of avaricious farmers or dealers in corn, because we see that countries which always depend on foreign supplies, suffer no inconveniencies from the want of a home-produce of corn, or other provisions ; but, on the

contrary, are secure and prosperous without it.

As an opinion has been industriously obtruded on the public mind, that the farming business cannot be in a thriving state unless wheat is at five shillings a bushel, the reader may require my reasons for estimating the shipping-price of our wheat at five and twenty shillings a quarter in the ordinary course of the trade of exportation : and as it is unreasonable to expect any man will take an assertion upon trust, the grounds shall be now furnished on which that opinion was built.

Sicily is well known to be the granary of the South : and her crops are so little liable to fail, that till these last fatal three years to that part of Europe, our merchants must and do know, that for ages past she has very rarely been found wanting in stock for the supply of any demand that appeared, having commonly the chief produce of several harvests treasured up in her caverns, from the paucity of purchasers :

chasers : and those of our merchants, who are conversant in the corn trade of the world, must likewise know, that about eight and twenty shillings a quarter has been the medium price at which it sold for exportation by the *salme*, including shipping charges, and also a duty paid to government. Now the Sicilian *salme* may be said exactly to correspond with the English quarter : and we will take a surer method of estimating the exact comparative value of money in both countries than by a track of exchanges, from the rate at which the Portuguese *moydore* is valued in them respectively. In England, the reader need not be told the *moydore* passes currently at twenty-seven shillings : and in Sicily it goes as currently for seventy-two *taries*. Estimating then seventy-five *taries* a *salme*, to be the medium price for that wheat, shipt free aboard (which it is believed no intelligent person will dispute) it will be found equal in price and measurement to eight and twenty shillings a quarter English money. But then another article comes into consideration, which
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is, that Sicily wheat is intrinsically better in quality than the best English by full twenty per cent. as a bushel of it produces as much flour as five pecks of ours, and it accordingly sells at a proportional higher price in all foreign markets. Now twenty per cent. upon five and twenty shillings is five shillings, which would make the comparative price of Sicily wheat thirty shillings a quarter, or eighty-one taries a salme, which may serve to shew how much I over estimate the medium comparative value of the wheat of this kingdom; which I choose rather to do, because there may perhaps be such a difference in the measures of the salme and quarter, as three or four quarts to the disadvantage of the latter.

The Sicilian may be considered as the standard of hard wheat, as English is of the soft; both of them being the heaviest grain of their respective kinds, and consequently the best. From this comparative estimate, which is made so very much in favour of the wheat of this kingdom, the
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natural market price of our own appears to be less than three and twenty shillings a quarter, because the cost and shipping charges here amounts to upwards of two shillings a quarter, and the price of Sicily is given at the rate it is shipped on board, free of all charges, and with a duty paid thereon. How much out of all bounds then, must the value appear at which we estimate our corn in the ordinary course of seasons ! and how ruinously exorbitant are the artificial prices of it generally made for our home consumption !

Let it at the same time be considered, that Sicily can by no means be considered as a manufacturing country, at least for exportation. Her chief trade is in corn : and yet, by a standing law of the kingdom, all exportation of it stops when the price gets to an hundred taries a salme, which, by the above mentioned comparative value of their money and measure with ours, is after the rate of thirty-six shillings and sixpence a quarter. Thus does the government of Sicily allow of no exportation of
wheat

wheat, even with the payment of a duty, at above six and thirty shillings and sixpence a quarter; while England, which is a country of general manufacturing and commerce, pays a bounty of upwards of ten per cent. on wheat bought in the market at forty-eight shillings a quarter, and proportionally more downwards to twenty shillings a quarter, at which price the bounty amounts to five and twenty per cent. Such are the comparative high rates at which the people of this kingdom are compelled to eat bread made with their own corn, and proportionally all their other kinds of food, owing to bounties paid on the exportation of corn, and from having artificial prices given to all kinds of provisions by such practises of dealers as are illegal; for all of which evils it is said, by many, there are no remedies to be found. But can this be owing to a want of knowledge, or is it to be attributed to a want of honesty in the nation? and surely, instead of wondering at a loss of trade, from such causes, it should rather appear matter of astonishment, that we have a
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single manufactory remaining in the whole kingdom ?

But as such a series of bad seasons about the world, as have happened of late, cannot be remembered by any man living, it must be natural to expect they will soon fall again into their usual course ; and then the state of the corn trade in general must become what it was heretofore ; nay from appearances we should imagine, that plenty will every where be greater, because improvements in agriculture and husbandry are of late grown peculiarly the objects of all countries. Such we hear is the case in the continental states of Italy : in Portugal they have destroyed many of their vineyards, to increase their arable lands : in Spain (which was occasionally before an exporting country) a society is formed of noblemen and gentlemen, who appear active in the encouragement of all such kinds of improvements, for which there is in that kingdom such a scope as may be called boundless. France has a like society in almost every one of her

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provinces; and there is hardly a northern country which is not bent on the like pursuits. We know, likewise, that in North America their population and cultivation are almost hourly extending; so that pushes among us at farther raised rents, on the expectations of a continuation of foreign demands at exorbitant prices, can be no better than the chimeras of phrenzy, or the blind efforts of a rapacious disposition, without conscience or consideration.

About ten years ago we unfortunately had a very scanty harvest, which occasioned all stocks of old corn to become exhausted throughout the kingdom: from which time to the present, occasional short crops at home, with occasional extraordinary calls for exportation, have together caused prices to be kept unusually high, while they also prevented our having at any time a great stock upon hand. But whoever remembers the general state of the corn trade for a series of years preceding that period of time must know, that, with thin crops some times at home,
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and at others great demands for abroad, English wheat was rarely thought a commodity safely to be dealt in for exportation at thirty shillings a quarter, shipping-price, though with a considerable call from abroad: and if it now-and-then did start so high as thirty-seven or eight shillings; as, for example, in the year fifty-three, occasioned by a great dearth throughout Spain, and also in Portugal, yet it soon fell again very considerably, while adventurers at those high prices lost in every degree upwards to fifty per cent. by such engagements. During whole years there was frequently so little demand for our corn abroad, that the shipping-prices did not much exceed twenty shillings; nay, in one part of the year thirty-eight, wheat might have been shipt at seventeen shillings a quarter, including the bounty; and yet upon the whole in a series of years, for example, from thirty-six to fifty-six, there was more money supposed to be lost than got by the merchants who traded in English corn to foreign countries. Upon due consideration of these matters, there-

more, with adverting to what has been mentioned of the improvements making in agriculture, and the increase of tillage in all countries, that from a favourable turn of seasons, which may naturally be expected, we shall find our corn in very little demand for foreign ports, and consequently the prices so low as to greatly reduce the exorbitant rents of the kingdom: while the bounties, if they are continued, will operate in the worst degree on our manufactories (as it has been shewn they must, and always do, when corn is cheapest) and possibly give the finishing stroke to the best trade of the kingdom ‡.

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‡ Sir William Petty says, p. 102, " The author of a most judicious discourse of husbandry (supposed to be Sir Richard Weston) doth from reason and experience shew, that lands in the Netherlands, by bearing flax, turneps, clover-grass, madder, &c. will easily yield 10l. per acre; so as the territories of Holland and Zealand should, by his account, yield at least ten millions per annum: yet I do not believe the same to be so much, nor France so little as aforesaid, but rather one bears to the other as about 7 or 8 to 1."

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The prosperity and safety of a state ought
surely never to be suffered to become sa-
crificed

Behold here the immensely superior value derived to lands from their application to the uses of trade, in a trading state, then they can even possibly receive from the growth of corn in a country which depends on importation for almost the whole of its supply.

The same able writer says, p. 123, " The other trade of which the Hollanders have rid their hands is, the old patriarchal trade of being cow-keepers, and in a great measure that which concerns ploughing and sowing of corn, having put that employment upon the Danes and Polanders, from whom they have their young cattle and corn. Now here we may take notice, that as trades and curious arts increase, so the trade of husbandry will decrease, or else the wages of husbandmen must rise, and consequently the rents of lands must fall."

Thus we have the opinion of so great a man as Sir William Petty, that husbandry is not the best and most important pursuit in a state, and particularly a trading one; as likewise, that the best application of lands is not to the produce of corn. But soon after Sir William's death, we took upon ourselves to rival the Polanders in their employment of ploughmen to the Dutch; and in order to prove successful very wisely taxed our-
selves,

crificed or endangered, for the sake of favouring or promoting any partial interest whatsoever ; and whoever supposes otherwise must be actuated by principles that can do him no honour. So likewise, ideas of distinct interests, in land and trade, can only arise from gross ignorance, or what is worse ; therefore the man who entertains them can be no good member of the national community. Lands, arts, labour, and every species of useful application, can respectively be intitled to no more than their natural prices, and the welfare of

selves, to raise our corn to artificial prices for home consumption, and enable the Dutch to consume it at from ten to twenty-five per cent. cheaper than our own manufacturers. At the same time we likewise made our brethren the Irish rival the Danes in the office of being cow-keepers to them ; not indeed to sell them young live cattle, but salted meats and butter, for feeding their workmen, and victualling their ships thirty per cent. cheaper than our own ; while those Dutchmen have been selling us madder (at their own prices, and by degrees have doubled them) to the amount of three hundred thousand pounds per annum, to the better employment of their lands and people, with at the same time helping their own manufactories thereby, and greatly injuring ours.

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all must require their not being suffered to obtain more : nay whatever is best for the whole, must also be best for every component part of a body-politic ; the soundness and strength of which must always depend on every limb and member being duly nourished, and kept in exercise and order. Noble and comprehensive minds will see and acknowledge these truths ; but narrow and selfish ones will ever be under the influence of crooked policy, and such false maxims as favour their own bias to partiality. In what is now said there is no intention to represent the selfish passions as either unuseful or pernicious, because they certainly are the great springs to all action ; but still there are distinctions to be made : a labourer, an artizan, or a merchant in licit trade cannot, for example, benefit himself without at the same time doing service to his country ; but a landlord or corn-jobber, who seeks to promote his own interest by means that ruin our manufactories and diminish our national commerce, (which are its best sources of strength and wealth) does therein indulge a selfish passion
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that is highly pernicious to the state, and therefore deserving to be curbed and discountenanced. In short, the welfare of the state as well as of individuals depends on the right operations of the selfish passions, under the steady guidance of such sound policy as insensibly establishes a perfect coincidence between individual and general welfare; but in whatever way they operate otherwise, it is a deviation from what is right to disorder and mischief, and of course they should then be checked, and restrained from doing hurt to the state.

The greatest disorder that we experience, and the greatest national evils which we can apprehend, have now, and will have hereafter, their sources in the bounties at present under consideration, if they are suffered to continue; such as artificial values given to property; artificial prices to provisions, and of course likewise to labour and manufactures; pernicious dealings in the great necessary of life; waste and damage from hurtful hoarding; a decrease of good employment; a clog on
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navigation, and a decrease of our best commerce. They are likewise to be considered in the lights of heavy taxes laid on all labour, all arts, all traffic, and all other kinds of property; not for the support of government, or defence of the kingdom, but to increase the nominal value of lands, without, in fact, enriching their owners; but however playing a high game of interest into the hands of jobbers, and all such intermediate dealers as are the worst pests of society. In fine, they are so absurd in their natures, and so teeming with evils, that it should appear more than political blindness to suffer their continuance.

It may perhaps be thought no bad apology for the frequent prevalence of such erroneous opinions as are propagated by fraud or ignorance (and taken upon trust which is too generally the case) to observe, that so respectable a body of men as the citizens of London, and who, as a trading community, are so interested in the matter, have fallen into the strange, but too ge-

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neral error, of supposing the evils arising from the bounties on exported corn, malt, and flour, would be proportionally lessened, as the prices of those commodities may become lowered||, to which the granting of them shall be limited: whereas the real fact is, the lower the prices of those articles are, the more the bounties operate to our national prejudice; as, for example, when wheat is at forty-eight shillings a quarter, the bounty of five shillings is but little more than ten per cent. but when that grain is at twenty-four shillings a quarter, the bounty of five shillings is above twenty per cent. which of course doubles the advantages therein given to the manufactories of neighbouring states §.

But

|| As appears by their late petition to the Honourable House of Commons.

§ A free trade in all kinds of provisions is the best security we can have of continual plenty, and also of their being kept at natural prices, which are those of Europe in general, and at which our rivals in trade are supplied; such being all that the owners of land have a right to expect,

But when mistaken opinions have been set in their true lights, we shall deservedly double the disgraceful ideas which they had spread of us in surrounding states, if we continue to adhere to them: and such must prove the case with regard to delusions like the following: First, the taxing of ourselves to make provisions cheap abroad and dear at home, and for encouraging the evil practices of jobbers and ingrossers: Secondly, in continuing our practices of being ploughmen to such states as have the superior wisdom to apply their own lands to better purposes; as for example, madder, which employs so many more hands for cultivation and cure, than corn does for growing and putting it in a marketable state: and for which article we are said to pay to the Dutch at this time no less than three hundred thousand pounds a year, after their having doubled the price of it to us, and more-

pect, and all that can be needful for the prosperity of the state. This has long been the practice in Holland, and all other trading Republics, is become that of France, and should be adopted by us, for the real welfare of the kingdom.

over so adulterated the commodity as to injure us in our dying and callico-printing, and of course in our manufactures ; all of them arts of the very highest importance to this kingdom, and in which they are themselves our strongest rivals: and, thirdly, in undermining our distilleries, manufactory of starch, &c. by supplying other countries with materials so much cheaper than we can use them ourselves ; and, at the same time, the whole of their workmen with bread, beer, and distilled liquors, at rates so much below those at which our own are forced to purchase them: such being the evident effects of the bounties under consideration.

But more peculiarly inconsistent our conceptions and practices must appear in the eyes of other nations, by burthening ourselves with one kind of bounties to discourage the growth of flax, as those on exported corn, &c. must have a strong tendency to do ; and with another * to en-

* The additional duty, laid in the last Session, on such imported linens from abroad as are chiefly used by the poorest people of the kingdom for that purpose.

courage

courage it. Such counter-working schemes of policy might even be wondered at, if adopted by nations on whom science had scarcely dawned : but when they are suffered to disgrace one so enlightened as is our own, how much greater must the astonishment be which they will rationally occasion !

Were the bounties taken off that we now pay on exported grain, malt, and flour, our lands would soon become applied to the best national purposes. We should have an eye, in every thing relating to agriculture, to our own demand and consumption : there would become no occasion to grant bounties on flax grown here, or hemp imported from America ; nor should we send to the Baltic for so much of the latter, or to Holland for our madder : greater numbers of people would find employment from such growths, than can now by the raising of corn or breeding horses for exportation ; from which advantages, and those of natural prices for provisions, which must then take place, arts and manufactories would not only flourish,

flourish, but greatly multiply in the kingdom, and of course population abundantly increase, with commerce; all of which, together, must give to lands the very utmost of their true value, and secure its continuance to their owners.

Such are, beyond all doubt, those principles of policy by which a nation can best acquire prosperity, or secure its continuation; therefore every refinement thereon, especially if contrived for the serving of partial purposes, ought never to be considered in any other light than as unjust, weak, and mischievous.

The bounties under consideration are the causes of two kinds of taxation on the people: the first of which is, for their payment when due; and the second, and much most grievous is, in the artificial prices which they give to all kinds of provisions; which on bread is from a tenth to a quarter part of its value, as prices may happen to be; and on most other kinds in a still higher degree, owing to the partial
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application of lands. Now should the opinion be allowed true, that it is necessary, for the good of the state, to tax the people to the fullest exertions of labour and industry, it must remain to be considered, whether it is just or politic, that the produce of those taxes should be paid to land-owners, farmers, jobbers, ingrossers, and dealers in provisions, which is here actually the case. All such kinds of taxes in other countries are imposed for the uses of the state; and in proportion as the people furnish supplies of them in that mode, they are excused doing it in others: but here the state receives no part of such heavy and grievous taxations, they being in part paid to land-owners, and the rest are seized by avaricious and extortionate dealers of all kinds, and mostly by those who are such in illegal ways. How absurd, how iniquitous, is such a system of policy! and especially in the situation of this state, which is burthened to such debility by debts and taxes, that administrations have appeared busied in measures that were contemptibly piddling for the retrieval of its circumstances,

stances, from the want of ample resources; while they have seen our national trade declining, without knowing how to apply relief; and even tamely suffering injuries and insults from the least formidable states †.

Every state must be considered comparatively strong or weak, in proportion to its resources of taxation for support or defence. Then while we feel and lament the scantiness of our own, are we to impute to ignorance, or what other cause, that the landed interest, and the active, operating vermin under it, are permitted in such excessive degrees to tax the whole people, and even enervate government, by drying up such copious resources to the state? If the people are to be taxed in a high degree for provisions, it surely ought not to be in

† Witness Portugal, whose trade and capital must be always at our mercy, and whose bullying minister of state is abhorred by the whole people of the kingdom; while the balance of trade with that country appears to be turned against us, by that truest barometer of trade, the rate of exchange from thence.

favour

favour of rivals abroad and locusts at home, but for the easement of state burthens, and eventually themselves, from reduced taxes of other kinds; in both of which modes, while it served to favour our manufactories, arts and commerce, it would open extensive resources in future to the state. But it would be better the whole land-tax were remitted, than that it should be suffered to colour a practice so pregnant with all kinds of national injury, as is the payment of those bounties which are the objects of our present consideration; and which could not be continued but by the power and influence of those of the landed interest, who, at the same time, as hath been already shewn, reap no other than an ideal advantage therefrom, in the mere nominal rents and value of their estates. But let them timely consider, when trade, arts, and their followers, are become taxed out of the kingdom, on whom the evils of such of migrations will most heavily fall at last: and indeed if effectual remedies for prevention are not speedily applied, those worst of all evils must be at a much

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less distance from us, than the blindly-interested will believe, or most other people may be likely to apprehend.

There can no rational doubt be entertained, if all the various powers of the nation were stimulated to strong exertions by right influence, that they would be capable, under a wise direction, of soon retrieving the circumstances of the state, and raising this kingdom to such a degree of permanent prosperity and power as no other state ever yet attained to, from the beginning of time. But this can never be done without union, which is the foundation of all strength; and particularly an union of interests, for the promoting of common good, by the removal of every idea, that there can, consistently with general welfare, exist distinct interests in the kingdom: for trade can certainly have none, nor owners of lands be indulged with pursuing any, but to their own infinite injury eventually, and also the ruin of the state.

POSTSCRIPT

POSTSCRIPT.

WHEN the preceding pages had nearly been printed off, the quick run to a third edition, of a pamphlet, intituled, "Thoughts on the causes and consequences of the present high price of provisions," induced the writer to peruse it, though he had been long wearied with fruitless reading on that subject. On looking it over, he found himself, as usual, disappointed; but however, as it had been much read, lest ridicule should be mistaken for reasoning, or misrepresentation for truth, he resolved upon laying before the public the few following remarks on its contents.

The two following causes are assigned, by this writer, for the present high prices of provisions; first, the increase of the national debt: and, secondly, the increase

of our riches, “ That is (says he) from
 “ the poverty of the public, and the
 “ wealth of private individuals.”

Were these the real causes, the evils must be irremediable by any other means than the discharge of our public debts, and at the same time disburthening ourselves of all superfluous wealth; neither of which could effect a radical cure of the evil: though the former would be a measure most happy for us to accomplish, and which, if done, would in a great degree perform the latter; for were all fictitious wealth removed, that which is real among us would be found no mischievous burthen.

What he remarks on the operations of taxes is sufficiently obvious: but his reasoning thereon is by no means conclusive; that to such causes and operations must necessarily be attributed all subsequent advances of the prices of our native provisions, and, of course, the whole increased value of lands; because, as hath been shewn in the preceding considerations, they

they have been greatly caused by the bounties on exportation, and the speculative dealings and practices at home, which have been occasioned thereby.

Could the whole debt of the nation be immediately paid off, and, in consequence thereof, the taxes discontinued which have been mortgaged for the payment of interest on them; the doing of either, or both, would have no effect on the prices of corn, &c. because they are not dependent on a home, but foreign demand. We are taxed to the degree of from above ten to five and twenty per cent. for what we export, as prices may chance to prove, in order to make us pay so much more in price for what we consume at home, and foreigners so much less: and this artificial price given to our corn at home, is the cause of so much occasional hoarding upon speculation, as more than doubles the evils arising from the simple operations of the bounties in the general course of things. The exorbitancy of prices consists in their comparative degree here with those of other countries; and

and as that degree is greatest when provisions are cheapest among us, consequently, our people must always suffer proportional hardships, and our trade in exported manufactures be much obstructed thereby.

But let us consider the effects of the sudden payment of our debts and annihilation of our taxes in another light: the first operation of which would be, to set great numbers of people upon contriving how to employ so much money to the best advantage. This might in all probability increase population apace, and, of course, so extend the calls for consumption at home, as to raise the prices still higher; which the easements to trade from reduced taxes for some time might favour, till the policy of rival nations should counterwork that advantage; and then, with the continuance of the bounties, every thing would again fall into the same state as at present. Thus the reduction of taxes would not cause the prices of provisions to decline; consequently they have not their root in taxation, but evidently in the bounties,

bounties, which give them a most mischievous artificial price, made infinitely more fatal in its operations by the craft of speculative dealers ‡.

‡ This writer says, p. 22, " Was our whole national debt to be at once paid off, by the introduction of all the treasures of the East, it would but accelerate our destruction; for such a vast and sudden influx of riches would so enhance our expences, and decrease the value of money, that we should at once be overwhelmed with luxury and want." But to this it may be answered, admit of a free trade in provisions, and then that and twenty other such sums, if at once poured into the kingdom, would produce no ill effect whatsoever. It is not the lowered value of money, or increased value of provisions, by natural operations, that causes the evils complained of; but the artificial diminished value of the former, and, of course, augmented value of the latter, is the sole source of our calamities; which mischievous effects have their cause in the bounties. It is not owing to the dearness of provisions about the world that our trade and poor are made to suffer, but to the comparative dearness of them here to what they are in other countries, which is caused by the bounties. Take off the bounties, and admit of a free trade in provisions, and then the products of our lands would have their natural and equitable value, which is all they can fairly be entitled to: and then the trade of the kingdom would soon flourish in all its branches, as that the circumstances of the state might speedily become retrieved.

So

So much for his opinion of the effects of public debts on the prices of our native provisions. Let us now inquire into the grounds which he furnishes for supposing a great increase of national riches; which are, “ Our public works, our roads, our bridges, and our pavements; the prodigious extent of the capital, and many other considerable towns; the possessions and expences of individuals, their houses, furniture, tables, equipages, parks, gardens, cloaths, plate, and jewels.” But this supposed increase of private opulence he, at the same time, owns is in a great degree owing to the actual cause which increased our national debt, “ that is, to the enormous expence and unparalleled success of the late war, and indeed very much arises from that very debt itself.” Which is saying in effect, that much artificial property has been created, to the impoverishment of the many, and the making of the few rich; with diminishing our most gainful trade, and debilitating the state. In short, our increased opulence is of a piece with the increased expences of a mortgaging prodigal,

prodigal, and menacing of a like issue. Our grandeur all depends on a paper superstructure, which may have its foundation sunk by the loss of our Asiatic possessions, the disgust or stubbornness of our colonists, an unavoidable war, or the continued decline of our trade of exports, which is manifestly great already. There may indeed have been some fortunes made by captures, and the spoil of enemies in the late war; but at the same time it may be doubted, whether our traders did not suffer by the same means in nearly an equal degree. So likewise some spoilers from the East may have imported great wealth, but hardly to the value of what the state expended in blood and treasure at the same time in those regions. Immense fortunes were also raised by commissioners, agents, contractors, government and stock-jobbers, during the late war, and are likewise in some degree at all times; but out of whose pockets, except those of the people of this kingdom, did they get them? and who else labour and starve to pay the interest, at present, as they must do

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the principal hereafter, if it does not sink of itself, from misfortunes happening to, or convulsions in the state? In short, those who frame high ideas of such opulence, think like the politicians who cry out, the increase of the sinking fund is an undoubted sign of our national trade being in a flourishing condition, though all it so gets is from our trade of imports only, which, in the proportion that they increase, all operate against us: or like those who boast of the happy effects of our public credit, when it enables us to mortgage our lands and labours to foreigners, for money borrowed to squander away in German broils, or for the defence, in sham wars, of such grateful allies as Portugal. The apparent affluence of the few, at this time, is owing to the proportional poverty of the many, and the surest of all signs of the want of right internal regulations. We mistake the monopoly of property for the increase of national riches; which can only in a safe channel be derived to us by trade.

Instead

Instead then of estimating on moonshine and paper, let us rather examine into the state of our stock of real money, which will always be proportioned to the state of our trade; the quantity of gold and silver in the kingdom being as much the barometers of our general national trade, as the exchanges are of the state of our dealings with particular countries: for the general balance in our favour will be manifested by an abundance of the precious metals among us, as the balance turning against us will be discovered by a want of them. Now it may be remarked, that our circulation at home has not for many years been clogged with foreign coin, as was the case heretofore, though so great a drain of it from this kingdom as was that for India has, in the mean time, been gradually shutting up, and is now at least in a great degree become closed; and yet gold has for a considerable time past been, and is now, at a price much beyond its par-value: which circumstances together must serve fairly to shew, that our solid national wealth is not so abundant as such

politicians as this writer would persuade us to believe; and indeed the whole of his doughty performance serves to let us see, that, though compleatly skilled in court sophistry and cant, the whole of his knowledge is no other than superficial: he writes more like a wit than a philosopher; aiming rather to laugh than to reason men out of their opinions.

The riches of a state can never be rightly estimated by the figure of dealers, and more especially those whose traffic is among ourselves; because their dealings serve only to make property change hands, without adding one farthing to the national stock. The very powers of wealth or interest too generally furnish the means of oppression: therefore opulent farmers, graziers, mealmen, and jobbers, must from the nature of things be mischievous to the community. The same may be said of combining cheesemongers, who contract for the yearly produce of the cheese and butter dairies of whole counties, and by that means crush or oppress inferior dealers,
and

and distress the whole lower orders of the people. As much may be said of contracting carcass-butchers, poulterers, fish-mongers, and all others who prevent the bringing of such commodities to public markets, where the number of sellers can only prevent extortionate prices. But can affluence in such people be considered as any proof of the increased solid riches of the kingdom? surely no: while to discover the effects of them, you must examine parish-rates, hospitals, alms-houses, prisons, ruined and uninhabited buildings, and count the numbers of homeless wretches who appear in the roads, and crowd the streets. And what should we think of such men as venture to assert, that for the cure of such evils there are no remedies to be found; when the ancient laws of the kingdom so plainly point them out, as well as the practice of every other state, from the most despotic of all governments, down to the most democratic constitution?

Again: does the opulence of mercers, lacemen, jewellers, or any other dealers in
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the luxuries or dissipations of the times, add any thing to our national stock of wealth? no; the gains of some of them rather eventually diminish it, especially those which arise from dissipation; from occasioning, with a loss of time, a loss of labour, which in effect is the truest wealth of a state.

In like manner, merchants may acquire great riches by the trade of imports: all articles of which, unless such things as are absolutely necessary, or for re-exportation, are actually against us in trade; either by lessening the balance we receive, or increasing that which we pay to the state imported from. Such merchants therefore may grow rich by a traffic which impoverishes their country.

So likewise, merchants concerned in our trade of exports only, which is by far the most valuable commerce to a nation, may thrive by their business (though no trade has been so little profitable of late years as that from hence in exported manufactures)

tures) yet add nothing to our national stock of riches, if the balance of trade with that country is against us: in short, some men may grow rich from exports to, and others by imports from, the same foreign country, which all the while is draining us of our wealth.

Exactly of a piece with the face of opulence in other appearances, is that which he draws of the increase of the capital and other great towns; by which appearance we must suppose he means to steal on the public mind an opinion of our increasing national population; a circumstance which, if made evident, would be admitted as the fullest proof of the kingdom's really being in a state of prosperity. But, unluckily for him, we have recently had a glaring proof to the contrary; from no less authority than, as is universally believed, the pen of a late first lord of the treasury; who says ||, “ The effect has been so great,
that

|| In a tract, intituled, “ Considerations on the trade and finances of this kingdom, &c.” published in the year

that instead of 986,482, which was the number of houses in England and Wales no longer ago than the year 1759, there are now but 980,692, and the destruction of 5,790 in so short a space as eight years, is such a symptom of DISTRESS and DEPOPULATION as to require every attention to check the progress of the evil, and to avoid any measures which may accelerate or increase it."

This calculation is indeed made on behalf of the poor distressed land-owners, who are the very people whom every minister has thought it for his interest to pity, flatter, and humour, too often to their own misfortune, as well as to the great injury of the state. But let this over-sufficient writer, from this circumstance,

year 1766: on which quoted passage there appears the following note. "The destruction in the country must be greater than on this account it appears to be; part of it being balanced by the new buildings in Westminster, which are taken into a general account of the houses of the kingdom. If these were deducted from the balance, the number destroyed in the country would be seen to be much more than 5,790."

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take shame to himself, on so bold an appeal made to mens eyes for conviction of the highly-flourishing state of the kingdom, when so much the contrary is the real case. Nor has the devastation of houses been confined to those of poor husbandmen and cottagers; for it has reached manufacturing towns and villages, and is like still more so to do, if men who must have real knowledge are faithful in their reports; nay even with respect to the woollen manufactories of Yorkshire, which county should, from uncommon natural advantages, be considered as their last stage of migration within this island: for when they become starved from thence, the crossing of the Tweed will not do; they must either cross the Channel or the Atlantic ocean. But if he wants another proof of such general decline in this kingdom, let us refer him to that article in his own catalogue of hardships on those of the distressed landed-interest, which mentions the immense increase of the poors rate throughout the kingdom, as a counter-picture of misery to his finely-painted one of affluence; be-

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cause, for fair information, they are companions that should be seen at one view, and kept always inseparable.

The nearer individuals approach to a state of bankruptcy, the more signs of affluence they are seen generally to display : and perhaps it is the same with respect to states. Certain however it is, that all orders of people among us do affect the shew of wealth, and yet at the same time are complaining of great difficulties, and express fears of becoming ruined. Such is even the case with regard to this very writer, concerning the landed interest, in his picture of the great mansion-house §, with an owner so poor as to be hardly able to keep it in repair : and yet every one knows how much rents in general have of late years been raised, and the value of estates increased ; and we also know to what a height luxury is grown among that order of people.

But let us look beyond fallacious appearances to discover the real circumstances of the state, which comprehends the whole people: and we shall then find, that as a national community we are near an hundred and forty millions in debt, without any real cash to answer it; and, as every one exclaims, distressed for means to pay even the very interest on it. As for the real coin of the kingdom, that perhaps would do little more than answer the Exchequer, Bank, and India circulations, the annuities of the latter company, the unfunded debts of government, and what else there should be gold and silver always ready to answer. The India company indeed, it may be said, has a great stock of effects upon hand: but then it has also its great risks at sea; and its possessions abroad must be exposed to constant hazard. Such is the state of our wealth as a people: which can be no more considered as great, than that of an individual who lives in much pomp, while his estate is mortgaged almost to its full value. But paper, it is said, is as good as money for the ends of

circulation : and so are the notes of hand of private persons, while those who issue them are in such circumstances as to be always able to discharge them, or while they have sufficient credit to make them pass currently : but, however, we know times do happen in which either becomes endangered, from private credit being strained too far, or public credit becoming suspected ; and the farther the latter, like the former, is stretched, the more hazard must attend it. This however is most certain, that our solid riches are not abundant, though our fictitious may be greatly too much : and therefore our increase of riches is but of the imaginary kind, and of course liable to annihilation from any great national misfortune : the most fatal of which that we can suffer, will be the loss of our trade in exported manufactures ; and with that we are already menaced from the high prices of provisions, occasioned by the bounties granted upon the exportation of corn, &c. and not from any real increase of our national riches.

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It is certain, that every increase of money tends to lessen the value of it: but, to our misfortune, we have no increase of real money, though a great one of debts, and such moonshine as private wealth reflected from public poverty. But if there are more rich people in the kingdom than there were heretofore, and made such by the miseries of their country, they certainly are not the cause of a general rise of provisions; because, with improvements of lands and an increase of agriculture, population has so diminished as to allow them more for luxury and waste, without affecting the general stock: besides, there have vast numbers of families sunk from a plenteous to a spare mode of living, as this very writer appears ready enough to allow for the serving of his own purpose, witness the case instanced before with regard to landed people.

Let us not then hunt after feigned causes of effects which we all must consider as lamentable, when the real ones are so very obvious; nor suffer our minds to become
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bewildered in mazes of intricate policy, for the covering of imposture, when the avenue to truth lies so plainly open before us, as not to be mistaken, but from the grossest of wilfulness. It is no influx of real riches that has raised provisions to such high rates as they are at, nor has our fictitious wealth been the cause of so great an evil: for nothing can be more clear to those whose minds are open to conviction, than that the bounties on exported corn, &c. have continually created artificial prices at home; and therefore the the sufferings of the people, the decrease of our manufactories, and of course the decline of our most valuable trade, are chiefly owing to them; the natural and actual effects of which have been made clearly evident in the preceding considerations.

No apology shall be herein offered for the luxury of merchants, or any inferior orders of people: let statesmen take hints from it for the improvement of their system of taxations. This writer should however reflect, that all principles, manners, customs,
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and modes of every kind, are in all places derived from the highest, to the middle and lower orders of people ; and therefore while the source is polluted, it must be in vain to expect the stream will flow pure. But let correction be directed to the root of the evil. If this writer is in high life himself, he should consider, it were to be wished, that good examples came from thence to inferior stations, instead of reproaches to those in the latter, for being but nearly as vicious as themselves.

Was the author of these remarks inclined to indulge himself in a like vein of satire and pleasantry with the writer on whom he comments, he could greatly enlarge on the change of practice among those of the landed-interest ; many of whom, with good estates, used to content themselves with a country residence, in which they endeavoured, by laudable œconomy, to provide honourably and independently for their younger children : but now they live in town the greater part of the
year,

year, where they plunge into every species of luxury and extravagance, and generally spend the remainder in some other scene of public dissipation; wasting their wealth in profusion, and at the same time practising every species of mean servility, in order to obtain the favour of hanging their offspring on their country for support. Even Members of parliament would then leave their families in the country, and take lodgings for themselves in such places as Channel-Row, or like honest Andrew Marvel *, in Maiden-Lane, during their stay in town on public business. But now it is become the practice to shift stations with the seasons, from one of the great squares to another, for the sake of living in a more splendid house or neighbourhood; and all the while to go on in a state of wilful blindness to public welfare, playing, like statesmen and courtiers, at the desperate game of *the devil take the hindmost*. Why

* The last worthy representative upon record that received the pay of his constituents, who were the townsmen of Hull; and he indeed served them with patriotic fidelity.

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then should we wonder at the raised price of one kind of votes, as mentioned by this gentleman, when we observe, nay feel, that all kinds of them are every where rising, without affording grounds for astonishment; because, corruption, depravity, and partial selfishness ever did, and ever will, in all countries, keep pace with growing luxury.

But such accusations as these are all idle, as well in this writer, as in him on whose production we are animadverting. He however makes another charge, which is greatly less innocent, when he says †, “ The lowest manufacturer and meanest mechanic will touch nothing but the very best pieces of meat, and the finest white bread;” because nothing can be more evident, than that the earnings of those who have families will rarely admit of their eating any meat at all: and as for coarse bread, it is well known they do eat it in most parts of the country, as many do in town; and others,

† Page 12.

it must be supposed, would, if they knew where readily to get it. But surely to join in such malignant and groundless charges against an order of useful people, whose industry and callings are the genuine sources of wealth and power to the kingdom, can only serve to make deep impressions to the disadvantage of those minds and hearts which are guilty of them. The poor certainly have their vices, as well as the rich; but this difference attends their respective indulgence in them, that the former do it generally to their own injury, but the latter often to the injury of others, and not unfrequently at the expence of their country.

What this writer, or any other on this subject, has said, or can say, on the comparative value of money at the time of the conquest, in the reign of Henry II. or at any other period of time, with that of these days; or of the comparative prices of corn before and since the granting of the bounties, is all foreign to the purpose: the comparative prices of corn and other
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provisions at present, in this and other countries, and particularly such as are our rivals in manufacturing, being the single object of consideration, with regard to common justice, national policy, and the welfare of the state in such matters. If other nations have provisions cheaper than ourselves, they will from thence be enabled to underwork and undersell us; therefore it must be amputating our own limbs, or cutting our own throats, as manufacturers and traders, to tax ourselves, in order to make provisions dear at home and cheap abroad. To these right considerations let the question, as it ought, be confined: and then if a man will own that he cannot see on which side of it true policy lies, he deserves to be despised; but if he proceeds to quibbling, prevaricating, and evading truth and reason, he will then merit detestation.

In taxing imports, we tax ourselves: in taxing exports, we tax other nations: but the merchants and dealers, in either case, are personally entirely out of the question.

Taxes upon imports are not always the most judicious, because if high they encourage smuggling; and in any degree they throw pretences into the hands of traders to increase the prices of them disproportionably, to their own advantage, which is generally the case: and hence have arisen those profits, which, while they proved burthensome to the public, have occasioned all that luxury among inferior dealers, of which this writer complains. As far as it can be done with safety, it must be allowed right to charge coals, tin, lead, or any other product of this kingdom with duties upon exportation; nay, almost every other country tax exported grain: but there is no such thing as burthening manufactures with safety for exportation, in any mode; because that would be burthening labour, which is the source of population, and, of course, of wealth and power to a state. And as to the merchants concerned in that trade, they are indisputably to be ranked among the most useful of all subjects: and it is certain they make in general the most moderate profits of any of
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our traders, except the exporters of corn upon their own account; which last kind of business is so much a lottery at all times, that it has been long the common opinion of men experienced therein, that there is, upon the whole, more money lost than gained by adventurers in that branch of trade from this country.

It is granted to this writer, that no man who is wise or honest can at any time wish for war, unless he is in the sea-service; in which case it must be supposed a man's whole selfish prospects will outweigh his patriotism: but in our present circumstances, it would certainly in the last degree be ruinous; and therefore every power of the state should to the utmost be exerted for the retrieval of our national circumstances, without loss of time. But let those of the landed interest consider, this should more peculiarly be their care; for the merchant can soon place his whole fortune in whatever country he pleases, and follow it thither: so likewise the artist can readily carry his skill to the best market which

which offers; but the landed man must continue with his property here, let the storm of adversity become ever so strong. On which consideration, the late reduction of the land-tax may be pronounced a most injudicious measure; because there certainly ought to be no time lost for putting the circumstances of the state in a safe and respectable condition, and for favouring trade by a reduction of taxes.

Administrations, and even parliaments, must always depend on their own conduct for confidence and respect. But for any individual to suppose there are no remedies to be found for the present evils which we suffer, or even rooted maladies in the state, should be considered, at best, as discovering a great want of knowledge: for there are not only full means in the powers of the state for affording every kind of needful relief, but also for extreme aggrandizement, if they are with integrity and abilities applied. But those of the landed-interest, who have had the greatest hand in so heavily burthening the state, appear
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to have deceived themselves, in supposing, either trade or lands have a true distinct interest, for neither can have such. If the landed gentlemen burthen imports, they must eventually pay all such taxes under great disadvantages : and as for exports, which is the only kind of trade that enriches a state, all such commerce, unless in what can be got from no other country, may be either directly or indirectly all taxed away ; for it can neither be acquired or preserved but by accommodation in prices : and when it becomes lost, on whom but the landed men will the evil effects at last fall ?

T H E E N D.

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away; for it can never be acquired or
received but by some sort of payment;
and when it is carried to a foreign market the
landed man will not be able to pay it.



THE END.

